



Dot Lewis

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Highland Lawn Cemetery in Terre Haute, Indiana began in 1884. The City of Terre Haute purchased 139 acres of "hills and hollows" from Ray and Grace Jenkins for \$15,000. In the true Rural Cemetery style it was designed into well-grouped trees and shrubs, with the artistic placement of lakes, valleys and meandering paths by Joseph Earnshaw. His goal was to draw attention to the cemetery landscaping instead of the large monuments and mausoleums. Highland Lawn is the second largest cemetery in Indiana, with Crown Hill in Indianapolis being the largest.

The Chapel

The cemetery's chapel, built in 1893, is of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. It was designed by architect Jesse A. Vrydaugh and cost 10-thousand dollars to complete. It is located on the highest hill in the cemetery. The Chapel features gabled roofs, a domed brick basement and stained glass throughout. It was renovated in 1988 at the cost of \$65,000.

Highland Lawn Cemetery

The entrance to the cemetery features a Romanesque Revival Bell Tower. It was constructed of Bedford, Indiana limestone in 1894 by the Heidenreich Company. The adjoining arch was designed by Paul Leitz of Chicago and constructed by Edward Hazledine. The attached Rest House was built in 1909 as a waiting station for the interurban. Built by W.H. Floyd in the Colonial style, it is now the cemetery's offices.

Section 2

Samantha McPherson was buried

The first person buried here was Samantha McPherson who died of typhoid and was buried on October 29, 1884. She was 30 years old. Highland Lawn now has almost 27,000 graves.

Crawford Mausoleum

Highland Lawn has numerous mausoleums located throughout the cemetery. Each is individually owned. Some hold only two bodies, others hold up to sixteen. The mausoleums were built mainly from granite and marble. Other markers and stones depict interesting funerary art and sculpture, another way to promote social standing. In this cemetery, the larger the monument, the more prosperous and well-known the family.

Among those mausoleums in the cemetery, two have well-known legends concerning them.

John Heini

The best know story involves Terre Haute businessman John Hienl and his dog, Stiffy Green from the early part of the 20th century. Heini, pipe in hand, and Stiffy Green, so named because of his stiff walking gate and startling greenish colored eyes, would stroll through town, visiting with the folks they met. Stiffy Green was friendly but ferociously protective of Mr. Heini and did not allow anyone to get too close to his beloved master.

Heini Mausoloum

When John Heini passed away on December 31st, 1920, Stiffy was inconsolable. He sat be the coffin at the funeral and followed the family to the graveyard where he took up post at the mausoleum doors. There he remained, guarding his master in death as he had guarded him in life. Family and friends made many trips to the cemetery that winter to retrieve Stiffy and take him home, only for him to return to his master's crypt doors.

Stiffy Green

Stiffy mourned himself to death. Heini's wife paid tribute to his unwavering love and devotion and had him stuffed in the sitting position he had assumed for so long on those cold mausoleum steps. Stiffy was then placed inside the tomb, reunited at last with his master.

An evening walk

But it wasn't long before visitors began noticing that Stiffy had mysteriously moved from one side of the tomb to the other, and back. Rumors spread that early in the morning or at twilight you could see an elderly man and his small dog walking near the Heintz crypt, the smell the rich pipe smoke in the air and a low voice talking to his devoted companion who would answer with a happy bark.

Vigo County Historical Society

But all good things must come to an end – even in death. Vandals would not leave the site alone, damaging doors and windows. In 1985, thugs shot out Stiffy's right glass eye. The family decided it was time for Stiffy be moved and the Vigo County Historical Society Museum agreed to take him. There, the Terre Haute Lions Club built a replica of the Heintz mausoleum. Today, Stiffy Green is still on guard – unless he and John are taking an evening stroll in Highland Lawn Cemetery.

Sheets Family Mausoleum

The second well-known story involves the Sheets family mausoleum, where Martin Sheets, his wife Susan, and baby Ethel are interred. Born in 1853, Martin lived into his early 70's, passing in 1926. He saw many technological changes come about during that time. One new-fangled invention he found an odd use for was the telephone. Martin had one installed in the family mausoleum, just in case he was buried unconscious, but alive, and needed to summon help. It was stipulated in his will that a phone line be run from his crypt to the cemetery office. He set up an account with Indiana Bell Telephone that kept the line paid for and active, just in case.

Indiana Bell

The story could end here as a very odd but interesting bit of cemetery lore, but it doesn't. When Sheets' wife, Susan died years later, she was found in the kitchen with the phone in her hand. Many assumed she had been attempting to summon help. But according to legend, when the mausoleum was unlocked to place Susan's casket next to her husband, cemetery workers discovered the phone in the crypt was off the hook!

Off the hook

Eighty years after Martin Sheets was placed in the family mausoleum, the phone line was disconnected from the cemetery office, never known to have been physically used.

Eugene Debs

Highland Lawn is also known as the burial place for many famous people, including politicians Eugene Debs, Socialist Presidential candidate who ran for the office five times in the early part of the 20th Century.

Funeral Cortege for Voorhees

Also buried here are Daniel Voorhees, a U.S. Congressman and Senator from the mid-1800's, and inventor Theodore Hudnut, who developed a way to remove oil from grain, producing Mazoil cooking oil.

Elk's Rest

Highland Lawn Cemetery was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 for its significance in landscaping, one of only two Indiana cemeteries so designated.

A waiting friend

The cemetery is located at 4420 Wabash Avenue, just east of the city.

Highland Lawn is a cemetery where you can spend a day admiring mausoleums, exquisite artwork and sculptures. Even in winter, it's beauty and tranquility shine through!



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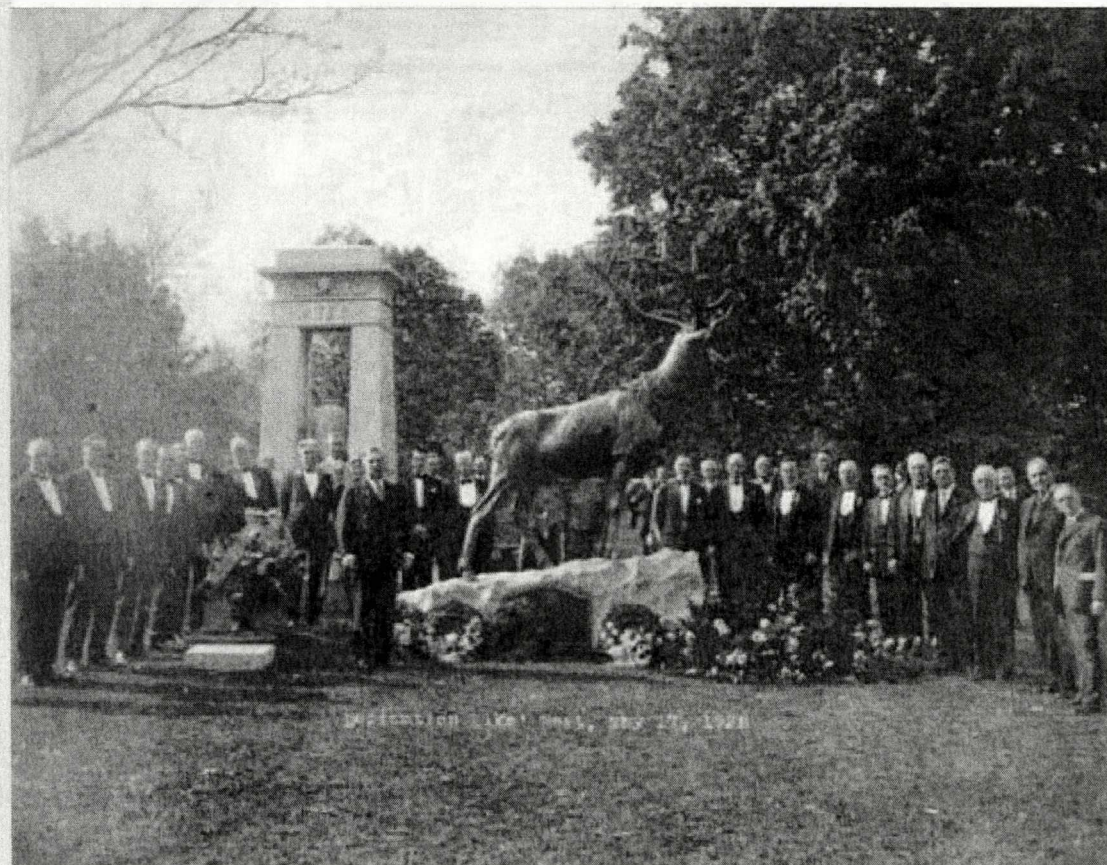
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Elk's Rest, Highland Lawn Cemetery, Terre Haute

This photograph, not a postcard, shows the dedication of the Elk's Rest of lodge #86, in Highland Lawn Cemetery, Terre Haute on May 17th, 1928. The photograph was produced by R. B. Hape of 813 1/2 Wabash Avenue, Terre Haute.

The Elk's mission is "To inculcate the principles of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity; to recognize a belief in God; to promote the welfare and enhance the happiness of its Members; to quicken the spirit of American patriotism; to cultivate good fellowship; to perpetuate itself as a fraternal organization, and to provide for its government, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America will serve the people and communities through benevolent programs, demonstrating that Elks Care and Elks Share."

The Elk's Terre Haute Lodge #86 was formed on May 1, 1888 and the original building stood on the corner of Seventh and Mulberry Streets. In March 2008, the Elk's put their current building at 3350 N. Fourth Street, the site of old Fort Harrison, up for sale.



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